

IN THE CLAIMS:

All claim amendments and cancellations are made without prejudice or disclaimer.
Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Withdrawn – Currently amended) A process for producing a SMAD interacting protein comprising:
conducting a two-hybrid screening assay wherein SMAD C-domain fused to a DNA-binding domain is used as bait and a vertebrate cDNA library is used as prey;
identifying a SMAD interacting protein in said two-hybrid assay; and
isolating said SMAD interacting protein.
2. (Currently amended) An isolated SMAD interacting protein produced by the process of claim 1 comprising:
conducting a two-hybrid screening assay, wherein a SMAD C-domain fused to a DNA-binding domain is used as bait and a vertebrate cDNA library is used as prey in said two-hybrid screening assay;
identifying a SMAD interacting protein in said two-hybrid assay; and
isolating said SMAD interacting protein.
3. (Currently amended) A An isolated SMAD interacting protein of the family of zinc finger/homeodomain proteins including d-crystallin enhancer binding protein and/or *Drosophila* zfh-1, wherein said SMAD interacting protein:
does not interact with full size XSMAD1 in yeast,
SIP1_{ezf} binds to E2 box sites,
SIP1_{ezf} binds to the Brachyury protein binding site,
interferes with Brachyury-mediated transcription activation in cells, and
interacts with a C-domain of SMAD 1, 2 and/or 5.
- 4-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) A An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 or a functional fragment thereof, wherein said functional fragment binds to the SMAD1 C-domain in a yeast two-hybrid assay, wherein said SMAD1 C-domain is expressed as a DNA-binding domain fusion in said assay.

9. (Canceled)

10. (previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the polypeptide of claim 8, together with a suitable carrier.

11-17. (Canceled)

18. (Withdrawn) A polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4 or a functional fragment thereof.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) A An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence depicted as the one letter code QHLGVGMEAPLLGFPTMNSNLSEVQKVLQIVDNTVSRQKMDCKTEDISKLK (SEQ ID NO: 21) necessary for binding with SMAD.

22. (Withdrawn) A SMAD interacting protein of a family of proteins which contain a cluster of 5 CCCH-type zinc fingers including *Drosophila* "Clipper" and Zebrafish "No arches" wherein said SMAD interacting protein
interacts with full size XSMAD1 in yeast,
binds single or double stranded DNA,

has an RNase activity, and
interacts with C-domain of SMAD1, 2 and/or 5.

23. (Canceled)

24. (New) The isolated polypeptide of claim 8, wherein the functional fragment is selected from the group consisting of amino acids 44-236 of SEQ ID NO:2, amino acids 166-236 of SEQ ID NO:2, and amino acids 44-216 of SEQ ID NO:2.

25. (New) An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 or a fragment that binds to an E2 box site in an electrophoretic mobility shift assay.

26. (New) The isolated polypeptide of claim 25, wherein the functional fragment comprises amino acids 977-1214 of SEQ ID NO:2.